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## Stefan M. MAUL & Rita STRAUSS, mit Beiträgen von D. SCHWEMER, *Ritual Beschreibungen und Gebete I*

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### Référence électronique

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Le livre de P. Werner constitue un ouvrage de référence pour tous les spécialistes de la Mésopotamie. Sans le remplacer définitivement, il se révèle complémentaire de *WVDOG* 67 et désormais indispensable pour tout chercheur intéressé par le temple de Sin et Shamash. Il faut remercier l'A. pour la nouvelle publication, spécialement pour l'attention aux cotes d'altitude, pour l'analyse de la documentation

disponible et pour la première présentation des objets venant de ce temple, illustrés en bonne partie avec des photos. Un mérite supplémentaire de l'A. est d'avoir effectué lui-même la mise en forme du texte, ce qui devient courant pour la nouvelle génération des archéologues, mais qui avant n'était pas demandé aux auteurs.

Laura BATTINI

**Stefan M. MAUL & Rita STRAUSS, mit Beiträgen von D. SCHWEMER, *Ritual Beschreibungen und Gebete I (Keilschrifttexte aus Assur literarischen Inhalts 4, WVDOG 133)*, Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 2011, xi + 240 p. dont pl. ISBN : 978-3447061070.**

It is exciting to see the progress in publication being made by the Assur team. Their project is described by J. Renger, "Ein Bericht über das Assurprojekt der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft and des Vorderasiatischen Museums zu Berlin" in S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting, eds., *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project Helsinki, September 7-11, 1995* (Helsinki, 1997), pp. 261-79, especially pp. 267-75 on the inscribed material. This report is now updated in his "Die Erforschung der Stadt durch die Orient-Gesellschaft verwoben mit den Wechselfällen deutscher Geschichte im 20. Jh.," in Johannes Renger, ed., *Assur – Gott, Stadt und Land: 5. Internationalles Colloquium der Deutsches Orient-Gesellschaft 18-21. Februar 2004 in Berlin* (Wiesbaden, 2011), pp. 1-13. The latest addition to the cuneiform publications of the Assur Project is this fourth volume of literary texts (in the wide sense of all traditional texts in the scribal repertoire). The best preserved and most important pieces belonging to this category were published years ago by Erich Ebeling in his *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts* (Leipzig, 1915-1923), by E. and Fr. Köcher, *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Assur* (Berlin, 1953), by Fr. Köcher, *Keilschrifttexte zur assyrisch-babylonischen Drogen- und Pflanzenkunde* (Berlin, 1955), and by Fr. Köcher in the first four volumes of his *Die babylonisch-assyrische Medizin in Texten und Untersuchungen* (Berlin, 1963-1971).

Unfortunately, much documentation on the findspots of the tablets was lost in the period before they reached Berlin (referred to as "a twelve-year odyssey"), so that, despite all efforts, only 30 of the 73 texts in this volume could be identified with their correct findspot or be attributed to a specific ancient collection in the city of Assur. However, some 26 texts can be ascribed to the building known as the Haus des Beschwörungspriesters, a building only partially

excavated by the German Assur expedition. See details in Stefan M. Maul, "Die Tontafelbibliothek aus dem sogenannten 'Haus des Beschwörungspriesters'," in St. M. Maul and N. P. Heessel, eds., *Assur-Forschungen* (Wiesbaden, 2010), pp. 189-228. This house was further excavated by Iraqi archaeologists, and it is reported that an additional fifty or so tablets and fragments, mostly in poor condition, were found. See B. Ismail, "Neuere Tontafelfunde im Iraq," in H. Hirsch and H. Hunger, eds., *Vorträge gehalten auf der 28. Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Wien 6.-10. Juli 1981, Archiv für Orientforschung Beiheft 19* (Horn, 1982): 199. Only one of these literary texts (a bilingual Sumerian and Akkadian hymn to the god Nabû) is published so far.

The greatest proportion of unpublished literary cuneiform texts from Assur belong to the large category of *āšipūtu*, that is, texts used by the *āšipu*, the so-called exorcist or incantation priest. Most unpublished pieces are relatively small fragments. This volume includes a number of *namburbi* texts (intended to avert the consequences of unfavorable omens) and "handraising" prayers (*šu-ila*).

Rita Strauss is responsible for the elegant and easily readable cuneiform copies and has made many of the joins of small fragments, mostly almost worthless unless they can be joined to others to make an understandable text. I especially appreciate that she has provided museum numbers on the copies of all the fragments —particularly valuable when some of the fragments have been published separately in earlier publications before the joins were known. Daniel Schwemer has added copies and editions of texts of the major magical series *Maqlû* ("burning"), thus forming a supplement to volume 2 of this series (Nos. 24, 25, 26, 28, 31, and similar texts, Nos. 27, 29, and 30). The first 21 text numbers are all *namburbi* texts, with not even a single complete line. In these texts, in the case of characteristic phraseology or if there is a close

parallel, one can confidently restore missing words or phrases, but if not, one is stymied. Readers should be aware that there are many conjectural readings in this volume as a whole (an example is the caveat, “es ist nicht ganz auszuschliessen” in reference to one suggestion on p. 87 note to reverse 1). The authors have opted for a somewhat bold approach to broken signs and have tried to wring something out of them. It seems to me that this is preferable to using “x” multiple times since any specific transliteration that jumps out at a reader as being unfamiliar or unexpected may lead to a closer examination and possibly to an alternative solution. An example is No. 5 obverse 11, where, after names of various kinds of stones and minerals, the transliteration reads TĒŠ.BI NI-a[b], “you ... together” where the suggestion is to read NI-a[b] as a form of *nurrubu*, “to soften by soaking.” I have nothing better to suggest, but I suspect that when a duplicate or parallel is discovered, we will find a simpler solution with a phrase attested in rituals (as the one with *nurrubu* is not). In No. 34 (a ritual to dissipate divine wrath), one has KU.KU *uqnī*, “pulverized(?) lapis lazuli,” where we generally understand KU.KU to stand for “kernels,” “flour,” “pulverized (material),” or something similar, though we do not know for sure what the Akkadian reading should be. Maul lists the generally recognized possibilities.

Adding even a small fragment (as in the medical text No. 52) to previously published texts gives

Maul an occasion to reedit the entire text, often with improved readings and detailed commentary (including collations of problematic passages in parallel texts). In this case, he documents a number of occurrences of *ziqin abatti* (a medical ingredient) not previously recognized. This is the first volume of the series to have a glossary and also a list of logograms —thus making the texts more accessible to scholars who are not specialists in these particular genres.

This volume represents another significant step in publishing the Assur texts now in Berlin. Apparently there is no mention in this volume of any plans for Assur texts now in Istanbul (at the time of excavation, Assur was within the Ottoman Empire and the government’s share of the finds were sent to the capital, Constantinople). Maul refers briefly to these texts on p. 193 of his article on the Haus des Beschwörungspriesters cited above. It should be mentioned that Köcher published some of the Istanbul Assur medical texts in the volumes cited above based on excavation photos.

I know very well the frustration of dealing with poorly preserved texts out of a sense of institutional responsibility. The authors have acquitted themselves most admirably of an unenviable task and deserve heartfelt thanks for their excellent work.

Robert BIGGS

**Lætitia GRASLIN-THOMÉ, *Les échanges à longue distance en Mésopotamie au I<sup>er</sup> millénaire. Une approche économique (Orient et Méditerranée 5)*, De Boccard, Paris, 2009, 516 p., 13 cartes, ISBN : 978-2-7018-0268-8.**

Proposer une approche économique des échanges terrestres à longue distance en Mésopotamie et en Syrie durant la première moitié du I<sup>er</sup> millénaire av. J.-C., soit aux époques néo-assyrienne et néo-babylonienne, est le but de ce travail, rédigé par une auteure qui bénéficie d’une double compétence, d’historienne et d’économiste. La méthode en est ainsi définie : « étudier les sociétés anciennes avec un regard d’économiste revient donc à la fois à se demander comment les théories modernes peuvent apporter un éclairage nouveau sur le passé et comment la connaissance de ce même passé peut compléter la connaissance économique » (p. 96).

L’ouvrage commence donc par une présentation des sources et des théories économiques. La documentation disponible comprend, en majorité, les textes cunéiformes néo-assyriens, qui consistent essentiellement en inscriptions royales, lettres et

archives privées, et néo-babyloniens, notamment les archives administratives issues de deux temples, l’Eanna d’Uruk et l’Ebabbar de Sippar. Ces sources concernent surtout le commerce de Mésopotamie ; s’y ajoutent, pour les régions du Levant, certains passages de la Bible. L’ouvrage utilise aussi ponctuellement les inscriptions alphabétiques hébraïques, araméennes et phéniciennes. On soulignera l’intérêt du caractère synthétique d’une telle étude, car les sources de ces différentes époques et régions, de natures très diverses, sont en général traitées de façon séparée.

Les grands modèles économiques, parfois mis à contribution de façon explicite ou non par les historiens du Proche-Orient, sont ensuite présentés au lecteur : weberien, marxiste, anthropologique (en particulier les travaux de K. Polanyi) et diverses approches modernistes ; puis les éléments de ces théories relatives au commerce international sont